Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.   (Original) A system for providing an online multi-merchant gift registry service over a

distributed network, with the capability to support multiple online merchants of any size

and from any net-accessible location in the world, the system comprising:

a plurality of Service Provider (SP) sites connected to the distributed network, each SP site

running at least one service application to provide an online service to users over the distributed

network;

a plurality of user computers connected to the distributed network, each user computer

running at least one client application for accessing online services of the SP sites;

a gift registry site connected to the plurality of SP sites, the gift registry site running at

least one gift registry service, the gift registry site including a user database containing

authentication information of users that have registered to use the gift registry service, and an SP

database containing authentication information of service providers that have registered to

participate in the gift registry service, the registered users accessing the SP sites from the user

computers over the distributed network;

a database which stores user-specific customization data, the customization data specifying

preferences of the registered users with respect to the online services of the SP sites, the

customization data provided to the SP sites by the online multi-merchant gift registry service to

enable the SP sites to customize the online services to the preferences of individual registered

users;

a database which stores service provider information, the service provider information

specifying communication information necessary for establishing secure connections between the

service providers and the gift registry site;

a database which stores all registered events, the said registered event database maintaining

for each event a list of gift items and distribution lists associated with said event;

a database which stores wish list items;

a database which stores user reminders;

a database which stores SP notifications, the SP notifications being triggered by registered events, the SP notifications causing the SP sites to perform site-specific actions;

an authentication protocol for enabling the gift registry service to authenticate users and service providers, and communication links with the service providers' systems, the authentication protocol implemented by software components of the service providers' site and the gift registry site;

2. - 28. (Cancelled)